

# PEOPLES LAND ORGANISATION

P.O. BOX 124

THYOLO

MALAWI

*Physical address: Khonjeni Turn Off near Chiperoni Blanket Factory*

Email: peoplesland66@gmail.com

*Land is real wealth*

---

Ref: PLO: 1/3/2015

14<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

His Excellency **Mr Ban ki Moon**

Secretary General

United Nations Organization

Washington DC

United States of America

Dear Sir,

## **GRIEVANCES RESULTING FROM THE COLONIAL LAND GRAB IN MALAWI**

Your **Excellency Mr Ban Ki Moon**, great wisdom and justice be upon you!

You must be very aware Sir, of the African colonization that resulted from the European countries scramble for the partition of Africa which happened over the past century and a half ago. This colonization resulted in land grabs by colonial agents across Africa some of whom came to Nyasaland now called Malawi.

According to the Malawi *Estate Land Utilization Survey* of 1997 carried out by the University of Malawi that was also verified by the Malawi *Presidential Commission of Enquiry on Land Policy Reform* whose final

report came on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1999: all land that the colonialists in Thyolo and Mulanje now claim to be their own under **freehold title** was '*fraudulently acquired*' and that '*this remains a cause of legitimate land grievances in southern Malawi*'.

In the spirit of togetherness and love, the Peoples Land Organization (PLO), an indigenous legal grouping of concerned people in Thyolo and Mulanje, resolved to clear these past mistakes by asking the current colonial estate owners to pay the descendants of the real owners of the land some fee for the use of their land on rent starting from 1914 to the present at a rate of **£65** per acre per year. Besides, as all the colonial estate owners of Thyolo and Mulanje used Thangata forced labour of indigenous people to develop their plantations contrary to the International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations, the estate owners were also asked to pay a wage of **£6.13** per hour per individual for each person involved in the Thangata system starting from 1914 to 1963. Further to these demands it was seen obligatory that any further expansion of colonial estate infrastructure into the **25, 000** hectares of idle colonial estate land need to be stopped immediately because we the owners of the land need the land now. This idle land is not subject to the proposed land rental charges and should return to us the owners to use it to build houses and plant food crops starting this September 2015.

These demands were presented in writing to all colonial estate owners in Thyolo and Mulanje on **5<sup>th</sup> February 2015** including the Government of Malawi and have not yet been complied to by the estate owners while the Government is dilly-dallying with promises to intervene which are now long overdue. There are also indications that the Government would like to discredit this legitimate claim on land by the people of Thyolo and Mulanje by negatively politicizing the issue and defaming the PLO which has tirelessly struggled with local peoples efforts since 2009 to let this land injustice be resolved.

Now, as we the PLO have exhausted all perceived local avenues to resolve our land grievances over colonial land ownership in Thyolo and Mulanje, and seeing the sad direction the Government of Malawi would like to drive our legitimate land grievances through badmouthing and tainting the images of its leaders through traditional leaders and politicians, we the members of the PLO have resolved to seek the intervention of the United Nations Organization using the **International Court of Justice** on the matter. We would like the world body to do the following:

1. **Examine all legal matters surrounding our claims** for Thangata forced labour wages and land rent payment for the use of our ancestral land and labour by colonial agents who opened plantations in Thyolo and Mulanje in Malawi and then **rule** whether the claims are legitimate or not.
2. If the claims are found to be legitimate, then the UN should **enforce the ruling** to pay the claims on all colonial estates of Thyolo and Mulanje through the Government of Malawi as a UN member.
3. If the Government of Malawi shall be adamant to act as instructed, the UN should then **preside over a REFERENDUM on the political independence of Thyolo and Mulanje Districts** from the republic of Malawi so that, once endorsed, this unique land and Thangata issue could be

resolved by the affected people of Thyolo and Mulanje alone in their own sovereign state, under the United Nations, in the interest of **self-determination** 'which is the *right of all people*' since they are in Malawi by **consent** not by **force**.

4. If a, b and c above are not possible, then the UN Security Council should pass a resolution to **Suspend Malawi from UN membership** by reason of *perennial human rights abuses on the people of Thyolo and Mulanje based on Thangata and land grab claims* and then **impose sanctions** on all Malawi's colonial estate produce from Thyolo and Mulanje until the Government of Malawi complies.

This letter is written in the interest of **PEACE** and togetherness. While the Government of Malawi would like to divert the matter to the unnecessary circles, we the members of the PLO are very passionate about these issues and would like justice to prevail. A lot of people in Thyolo and Mulanje are suffering because **all their arable land was fraudulently taken away** by colonial agents and **their ancestors labour was illegally not paid for** by the same agents leaving them with **no wealth inheritance**. No amount of justice can heal these hundred year old wounds apart from the payments that have been proposed. The UN is therefore requested to act with wise justice on these matters guided by the **rule of law** as promoted by the International Court of Justice.

With lots of love and respect from the people of Thyolo and Mulanje, operating under the legal mandate of the Peoples Land Organization whose Common Seal is stamped herein: We are the trustees, executive committee members and ordinary members of the PLO whose names and signatures are written below:

(List of Petitioners organization profile and certificate of incorporation of the Peoples Land Organization is attached)